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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 8

THE REALIZATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by Human Rights Advocates, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is distributed in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[27 August 1993]

GE.93-85266 (E)

THE MFENGU:

AN UPDATE OF A POPULATION TRANSFER CASE STUDY

1. On behalf of the Tsitsikamma Exile Association, Human Rights Advocates wishes to provide additional information to supplement its previous report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/NGO/7) concerning the plight of the Mfengu people of South Africa, submitted to the forty-forth session of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

2. In 1977, the Mfengu were forcibly removed from their land in the Tsitsikamma region in South Africa to the homeland of Ciskei and, since that time, they have engaged in legal actions to regain their land.

3. The forced removal has cost the Mfengu their ability to be self-sufficient as subsistence farmers. As a result, the Mfengu men have had to leave their community to search for employment elsewhere. This splintering of community life has caused the Mfengu to lose their cultural identity.

4. Since the forty-fourth session of the Sub-Commission, the South African Government has failed to make a reasonable offer to settle the Mfengu land claims. The Mfengu continue their good faith efforts to reach an agreement with the Government.

5. Between January and July 1993, the Mfengu moved 28 families onto land which abuts their original lands in Tsitsikamma. Efforts to move another 25 families back to nearby land have been thwarted by a lack of funding. This interim move has provided an important psychological victory for the beleaguered Mfengu community.

6. Human Rights Advocates urges the Special Rapporteur on the human rights dimensions of population transfer, Mr. Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawaneh, to take into consideration the plight of the Mfengu and 18 other similarly displaced communities in South Africa.